a drunk (and died later in the day, as it turned out). Yet when I drove to Sapuk Village, formerly a notorious trouble spot, on that same payday evening, I had no fear of having to dodge rocks or the knife thrusts of young men leaping onto the road.

Drinking continues and so does violence, the authors acknowledge, but with some notable changes. Public drunkenness and violence occur less frequently, police arrests for drunken and disorderly behavior short of assault are more numerous, and drinkers are far more cautious than in the preprohibition days. While this may seem to have driven the alcohol problem from the streets into the backyard (homicides occur increasingly within the family or neighborhood circle), this in itself is no small achievement. But perhaps the greatest gain is that local people have successfully altered the pattern of alcohol use and in doing so, have reasserted their control over their community. The significance of this may have gone unnoticed in the continuing debate over prohibition if the Marshalls had not underscored it in their valuable little book. Before judgments are passed on the wisdom of the Moen law or on similar attempts of other traditional communities to "exorcise their evil spirits," *Silent Voices Speak* is must reading.

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Ples Blong Iumi: Solomon Islands, The Past Four Thousand Years, edited by Hugh Laracy. Suva and Honiara: University of the South Pacific, 1989. ISBN 982–02–0027–X, xiv + 151 pp, appendixes, photographs, select bibliography, index. US$12.

The book *Ples Blong Iumi* is important in three ways: it represents the first attempt by Solomon Islanders to reinterpret, produce, and add an indigenous perspective to their history; it contributes to the development of literature by Islanders emerging from this country and the Pacific; and by using and documenting indigenous sources of knowledge, it underscores the value of the experiences and achievements of the people of *Taem Bifo*.

In the chapter entitled "Digging," Alec Rukia presents two indigenous views of Islander origins and examines linguistic theories on the settlement of the Solomons by two distinct language groups (Papuan and Austronesian) that came from Southeast Asia between five thousand and thirty-five hundred years ago. He summarizes the nature, development, and findings of archaeological investigations. Remains are categorized into three broad "cultural complexes," the Lapita Cultural Complex being the only one that can be correlated with a linguistic group whose earliest settlements go back in time some three thousand years. The question of why Papuan speakers are present on Lapita sites cannot be answered at this time since no investigations have been conducted on the major islands (except Guadalcanal) where the oldest settlements are likely to be found. The current evidence does not represent the earliest settlements.

In "Remembering," Jan Sanga discusses how the various bodies of traditional knowledge were preserved

through their repetition and oral transmission. Memory is key in this process, and Sanga illustrates its importance through two stories, one being an account of the settlement of Ulawa that now serves as a record of the genealogy of the chiefs of that island. Memories of experiences and perceptions of Islanders who participated in major events such as laboring on European plantations and the Second World War add an Islander perspective to existing written records.

In "Writing I," Joseph Waleanisia begins with an examination of the use of European written records to reconstruct some of the past of Solomon Islands. He then traces the development of indigenous literacy, first initiated through missionization and later by international labor migration. Notable achievements include the ethnographic accounts by Geoffrey Kuper and George Bogese. The 1970s saw the birth of indigenous newsletters that served as a vehicle for discussion of important issues and for an intellectual debate between the local elite and the *Araikwao* (white persons). The participation of Islanders in documenting their own past is also given significant treatment.

In "Writing II," Edward Iamae illustrates the use of poetry as a form of expressive narrative for entertainment and as a means of preserving and transmitting knowledge and social values in *Taem Bifo*. Much like the earlier guardians of *kastom,* contemporary poets and other writers are seen as commentators on political, economic, and social values.

In the chapter "Time," Joseph Waleanisia discusses the concept of time, contrasting Western examples with some traditional ones. Unlike the reckoning of Western time, the function and measurement of traditional time were bound up with the occurrence of natural and supernatural events. Such events were used to chart important ceremonies and rituals, but these and people's immediate needs and activities in turn adjusted time, giving it a flexible, unregulated, and unstructured nature. The Lisiala Calendar provides a view that is numerical yet cyclical, in contrast to the linear dimension of Western time.

Romano Kokonge, in his chapter "The Arts," makes the close connection between the arts and the people's mundane activities. Valued not only for their aesthetic value, the visual arts had significant religious, ceremonial, and social meanings. The performing arts were forms of entertainment, maintaining social harmony, and a means through which traditions were preserved and passed on. Art forms and the contexts in which they were practiced or performed have changed tremendously following Westernization. What continuity has been maintained in some of the visual arts is mostly through their increasing commodification.

Lawrence Foanaota, writing on "Social Change," presents a generalized view of the impact of modernization on various aspects of traditional societies —settlement patterns, religious practices, population movements, and social organization. Amid these changes, continuity is maintained, for example, through family lineage, which determines the allocation of property and, most important, the inheritance of land.

In a broad discussion of religion,

Father Leslie Fugui and Simeon Butu attempt to explain the nature and function of traditional religion. The various Christian affiliations are situated in the history of the missionization of the different islands by the various Christian denominations. According to the authors, the most important contribution of Christian ideology has been the promotion of peace and national unity.

Moffat Wasuka, Toswell Kaua, and Simeon Butu discuss the traditional education that was carried out in a cultural context immediate and meaningful to the lives of children as they were socialized to become adult members of their societies. Western education, initiated by the missions, later supervised by the British administration, and now the responsibility of the Solomons government, alienates youth from their cultures and fails to fulfill their aspirations. One of the notable consequences of Western-style education has been the development of social differences manifest in the existence of an elite. As an institution through which social values are instilled and perpetuated, formal education, the authors imply, is likely to promote such differences, especially in a country where education is not accessible to all.

Sam Alasia discusses population movement as a feature of the islands' past that involved numbers of people moving between and beyond their islands. This traditional movement was intensified by the international labor trade in the 1870s and the subsequent development of plantations. Associated with population movement are the more recent inflow of other ethnic groups and the relocation of pockets of population due to pressure on land resources and natural disasters. In examining this modern movement, Alasia focuses on the movement between Malaita and Honiara.

John Ipo is concerned with several issues: traditional land tenure systems, land as the fundamental basis for sustaining a subsistence economy, and land as an intricate link to political and social institutions. The establishment of a Western export-oriented economy was necessary to support the protectorate and was facilitated through the alienation of large tracts of land. Disputes between Islanders and *Araikwao* planters were often due to misunderstandings regarding land ownership. The most significant current land disputes have been between the people and the government, which facilitates the exploitation of natural resources by transnational companies. There are also contests between more *kastom*-minded groups and those who now perceive land increasingly in commercial terms. Evidently government land development schemes have contributed to notions of individual land ownership.

Sam Alasia, in his second chapter, discusses the nature of the traditional polity and the development of Western-style politics. Colonialism, Christianity, and a capitalist economy resulted in the demise of many traditional political systems, and their replacement by a central government. He cites some of the significant indigenous political struggles against the protectorate as attempts by Islanders to either assert their own sovereignty or to participate in the colonial political system. Prior to the 1960s, Islander participation in politics was nonexistent. Political organization in the following decade was a step toward attaining self-gov-

ernment and the development of party politics. Alasia notes features of big-man politics that have been incorporated into contemporary political practices.

Ples Blong Iumi, like any other history, is not without its flaws and biases. Two basic questions that come to mind are: What sort of history are we producing? and Who is it for? Most striking is the unbalanced composition of the contributors. Among the fourteen writers, there is only one woman and no representative of other ethnic groups such as the *Araikwao,* the Chinese, or the I-Kiribati. While Guadalcanal, Santa Catalina, Marovo, Bellona, and the Shortlands are represented by one writer each, the other nine contributors are from Malaita. Consequently, although certain chapters use illustrations from some of the other islands, for example Kokonge's chapter on the arts, the book as a whole draws examples predominantly from Malaita. It would be more correct therefore to say that *Ples Blong Iumi* is a history seen through the eyes of one of the dominant groups, and a male-dominated one at that.

The other works in the University of the South Pacific history series were published both in English and the vernaculars. Why was *Ples Blong Iumi* not published in Pijin as well? Who is the intended readership—foreign scholars, our educated elite, or school children? If for school children, at what stage in the education curriculum is it intended to be used? Publication only in English drastically limits readership.

Ples Blong Iumi gives an elitist perspective on the Solomons' past. The emphasis on certain events and individuals in the chronology, the choice of photographs, and the contents of the chapters all illustrate this point. It is no wonder that the Western-educated authors of the book are concerned with reconstructing history or preoccupied with the rhetoric of preserving cultures and traditions. These writers are like tourists to the people and the past they describe. The people who actually live these cultures and traditions are not at all represented.

How can we produce or create Solomon Islands literature within a broader scholarship? Overall the chapters are uneven. While some are well-written, for example John Ipo's "Land and Economy," Joseph Waleanisia's "Time," and Jan Sanga's "Remembering," others are either too general or unsubstantiated. As a case in point, Lawrence Foanata's chapter on social change would have benefited from further research. Sam Alasia makes a direct link between recent population movement and rapid population growth (119). While it is true that population pressure on land resources was the impetus for the relocation of certain pockets of population, it is simply not true in the case of the Solomons that these phenomena are exclusively linked. There is also the question of a regional focus in this population movement. Although the movement between Malaita and Honiara is more visible, it is not the most significant. The proportion of people moving in and out of Honiara (1986 census) and Makira is about the same as that for Malaita. All in all, population movement since the 1960s is a complex phenomenon and should perhaps have been omitted from the chapter.

There are also flaws in the referencing style used. It is frustrating when archival material and other published works are cited without full references. It would have been useful to have included individual reference lists for each chapter. Finally, the volume would have been better served by more careful editing. In this way, misspellings of personal names and places, and inconsistencies in grammar, could have been avoided.

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Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule, by Vicente L. Rafael. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988. ISBN 0–8014–2065–2, xiii + 230 pp, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US$26.95.

My complimentary copy of Vicente Rafael's *Contracting Colonialism* is a gift that has already put me in great "debt." Answering more questions than it asks, covering more theoretical domains than those on which it focuses, *Contracting Colonialism* spills out of the boundary of early Tagalog-Christian colonial society to establish itself as an authoritative model for any historical and political inquiry into colonialism, Christian conversion, and the local, indigenous responses to these processes.

For Rafael, who is himself a native Tagalog speaker, the consolidation of Spain's imperial order and Tagalog conversion in the Philippine lowlands are best understood in terms of a series of translations between the agents of a Castilian Catholic regime and various classes of Tagalog society. To conceive of colonialism and conversion "from the perspective of translation," Rafael directs the reader to the semantic relations among the Spanish terms *traduccion* 'translation', *conquista* 'conquest', and *conversion* 'conversion'. Such affinities, according to Rafael, "reflect as much as they are reflected by their historical configurations" in the Spanish *Imperio* (x).

Rafael argues that translation's "configurations" reveal the Spanish intent and desire to identify, relocate, and reorder pagan (read Tagalog) ideas, words, and bodies back to their presumed positions under the hierarchy of God's Word and Kingdom. But translation also describes how various classes of Tagalog society (*maginoo* 'elites,' *maharlika* 'commoners') sought to appropriate external or novel things of value with which to guard against the shock or anxiety of threatening (colonial) impositions. Here translation simulates conversion in the very process of subjecting or submitting oneself to external, foreign systems in order to "inoculate" oneself against their possible threats. But for Spaniard and Tagalog alike, the history of colonialism entailed the translation or conversion—what we might call the "restructuration"—of threatening linguistic or political conventions into safe spaces from which to speak and therefore register one's involvement in a constantly shifting social world. As a predicate of colonialism and conversion, translation, or, as Rafael prefers, "mistranslation," denotes a political